

From: POLITICO Pro Energy
To: megan_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by ExxonMobil: Energy rare bright spot for Trump as 100 days near — More energy executive orders coming this week — Marches for Science draw scores
Date: Monday, April 24, 2017 4:45:50 AM

By Anthony Adragna | 04/24/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Esther Whieldon, Annie Snider and Alex Guillén

GEARING UP FOR DAY 100: Energy and environmental issues offer perhaps the most concrete accomplishments for President Donald Trump to point to as he nears the 100-day mark of his presidency. He's signed four energy-related resolutions wiping out Obama-era rules, put in place Cabinet officials dedicated to rolling back other regulations and unleashed a steady stream of executive orders and photo ops designed to reach his promise of U.S. energy independence. But whether any of this turns into a lasting legacy for Trump largely depends on what happens from here. His Cabinet lacks the political staff to follow up on his efforts undo rules like EPA's Clean Power Plan and Waters of the U.S., and there will be years of litigation over every move undoing regulations on the books. And his actions appear to have awoken scores of citizens opposed to his environmental deregulatory agenda (see below). More to come on this front as we near the actual date later this week.

SIREN! Trump plans to sign several additional executive orders related to energy on Friday. As Pro's Andrew Restuccia [reports](#), he'll sign one instructing the Interior Department to conduct a review of the areas currently available for offshore drilling and begin streamlining regulations governing offshore oil and gas development. And Trump will sign another calling on the agency to review previous national monument designations under the Antiquities Act. ME is old enough to remember when Republicans blasted Obama for signing so many executive orders, but this White House proudly proclaimed Trump's forthcoming actions mark the "most executive orders signed by a President since WWII."

SHUTDOWN FEVER: Lest you forget, the government runs out of money on Friday and there's no bill text staving off a shutdown yet. The biggest fight looks to be over the White House demand for funding for Trump's border wall in the final package, though OMB Director Mick Mulvaney [sought to downplay](#) the odds of a shutdown on Fox News Sunday. But one under-the-radar fight to watch is how Congress addresses the expiring health benefits for thousands of coal miners. Red-state Democrats [nearly shut down](#) the government in December before securing an extension.

METHANE CRA WATCH: There are only a couple of weeks left for lawmakers to use the Congressional Review Act to formally revoke an Obama-era regulation aimed at curbing methane emissions on public lands. Ads are still hitting the airwaves and web, and ME is hearing rumblings about a push to schedule a Senate vote. The conservation group Center for Western Priorities is out with [an analysis](#) of the money it has tracked that is being spent in hopes of nullifying with the rule. But Republicans said before the break that they were still short one vote, so here's looking at you Sens. [Cory Gardner](#), [Rob Portman](#) and [Heidi Heitkamp](#).

WELCOME TO MONDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Enbridge's Ritu Talwar was first up with the Pittsburgh Steelers as the first NFL team to visit the White House after winning a Super Bowl. Today's trivia: Who was the first president to throw out an opening

pitch? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

SCIENCE DRAWS A CROWD: Hundreds of thousands of people across the country (and internationally) gathered on Earth Day for the March for Science, defending the role of science in policy-making and protesting the Trump administration's inaction on climate change and proposed cuts for EPA. So many people gathered in Chicago that the police [asked others](#) to refrain from joining the crowd of some 40,000. It wasn't just in Democratic strongholds though: [Hundreds rallied](#) in Wyoming, one thousand [met up](#) in Omaha and [thousands gathered](#) in Texas (scientists even [held up](#) a supportive sign in Antarctica).

Here in D.C. people waited in [lengthy lines](#) in front of EPA HQ to take pictures, Rep. Don Beyer [posed](#) with a dinosaur in his "Keep the EPA Great" hat and Bill Nye called out lawmakers during his rallying cry to attendees. "Today we have a great many lawmakers — not just here, but around the world — deliberately ignoring and actively suppressing science," he said. "Their inclination is misguided, and in no one's best interest." Here's our roundup of the [21 best signs](#) spotted at the festivities.

Trump administration reacts to Earth Day: No direct response to the marches came from the president (though his motorcade came across attendees during a Saturday afternoon trip to Walter Reed), but Trump issued a statement on Earth Day vowing a commitment to conservation. "Rigorous science is critical to my Administration's efforts to achieve the twin goals of economic growth and environmental protection," Trump said. "We should remember that rigorous science depends not on ideology, but on a spirit of honest inquiry and robust debate." Two words not appearing anywhere in the statement: climate change.

His secretaries weigh in too: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt took to the pages of Montana's [Missoulian](#) on Earth Day to tout their ongoing efforts to balance economic growth with environmental protection. "It's time to put to rest the story of the last eight years of political division: We want a healthy America that can take care of itself," they wrote.

READY FOR HIS CLOSEUP: There wasn't a whole lot of new ground broken, but Perry delivered an elevator pitch of the Trump administration's energy policy during his first national television appearance in his new role. Perry noted to [Fox News](#) he didn't "argue" against the scientific consensus regarding human activity driving climate change, pledged to continue supporting renewables — "my history in Texas will speak for itself" — but vowed to roll back regulations in order to help unleash job creation. "It's really not rocket science, it just takes political will," he said.

Of note: Perry seems to have a sense of the incredibly broad and varied portfolio of his agency, as evidenced during his discussion of why DOE has a place on the president's National Security Council. "There's probably a lot of reasons that the Secretary of Energy needs to be sitting at that table when decisions are made," he said. "There are myriad tentacles, if you will, that go very deep and very broad out of the Department of Energy that affect the security of our country."

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PERRY TO ADDRESS NRECA: This afternoon Perry speaks to some 2,000 co-op leaders at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's annual legislative conference. Attendees are spending much of Tuesday and Wednesday on Capitol Hill and at agencies.

TRUCKERS WANT SUIT TO KEEP ON TRUCKIN': The industry group that represents manufacturers of truck trailers (the cargo-carrying section of tractor-trailers) is against EPA's request last week to stay its lawsuit for 90 days while it reviews the group's issue. In a Friday evening [filing](#), the Truck Trailer Manufacturers Association complained that EPA did not propose staying implementation of the provisions at issue, which require new trailers be made more aerodynamic. The standards don't take effect until 2018, but TTMA says manufacturers have to act well before then to comply in time. TTMA says it could go along with a 30-day delay so EPA has more time to review the issue, or the longer 90 days requested by EPA if the court or the agency gives a similar delay to the implementation deadlines.

PRIEBUS: WE'RE 'BEHIND' ON FILLING VACANCIES: White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus acknowledged on [Meet the Press](#) on Sunday that the Trump administration is "behind" on filling out various vacancies throughout the federal government but blamed Democratic obstruction in the Senate. "We have hundreds of people in the queue," he said. ME hears similar gripes from lawmakers on the Hill frequently, but the reality is the Trump administration hasn't formally nominated people for most of the slots.

CONTRACTOR WARNS OF POSSIBLE EPA DATA SITE CLOSURE: A federal contractor on Sunday night said that EPA has warned it may have to shut down an agency environmental data portal on Friday if government funding falls through. Bernadette Hyland, CEO of 3 Round Stones, wrote in a [post](#) on Medium that EPA has told her company to be prepared to "turn off" the [EPA Open Data](#) service on April 28 if there is a government shutdown, because in that case the agency "won't be able to give technical direction to continue any work." According to Hyland, the open data site went up last year, contains emissions data from four million sources (ranging from power plants to doctors' offices) and "is used for climate science research, life cycle assessment, health impact analysis and environmental justice." An EPA spokesman last night refuted Hyland's account and said she had no evidence to back up her claim.

WOTUS SHOWDOWN COMES TO THE SENATE: As the Trump administration prepares to pull back the Obama administration's signature water rule, longtime WOTUS critic Sen. [John Barrasso](#) will preside over a hearing Wednesday aimed at detailing flaws with the regulation and the process that produced it. His Environment and Public Works Committee hearing will host a who's who of players from the battle over the contentious 2015 regulation, including Michael Josselyn, a wetlands consultant and dissenting voice from the external EPA science panel that worked on the rule, and Ken Kopocis the Obama administration water chief who oversaw the regulation.

This'll be interesting: Maj. Gen. John Peabody, the retired Army Corps leader who penned [internal memos](#) to his political boss complaining that his agency was cut out of the regulatory process, will also be on hand, making his first public statements around the high-stakes political drama he was thrust into when the memos were leaked just before the rule was finalized. But his testimony won't necessarily be a slam-dunk for critics of the Obama EPA rule: the disagreement at the heart of the memos was related to limits the Obama rule would have placed on jurisdiction, and the Corps' contention that any such limits required a detailed environmental review. A similar dynamic could come to pass with a new Trump

administration rule, since Scott Pruitt's EPA is also in the driver's seat for the crafting of a new regulation, and is expected to push for far more dramatic limitations on federal jurisdiction.

If you go: The hearing is Wednesday, April 26 at 10 a.m. in 406 Dirksen.

LET'S GET ALONG? While in Texas on Friday for a speaking engagement, Pruitt held what appears to be his first meetings with environmental groups when he huddled with The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society. "We intend to do just that — protect the environment through sensible regulations that allow for economic growth," he told the groups at Earth Day Texas.

HOLD UP: After courts stepped in and granted a bunch of initial requests from the Trump administration to pause litigation over Obama-era regulations, observers expect the D.C. Circuit will continue to give EPA a wide berth to halt these suits and move toward repeal or revision. Pro's Alex Guillén has more in Energy Regulation Watch [here](#).

ZINKE'S WEEK STUFFED WITH OUTDOOR INDUSTRY, NRA EVENTS: Zinke is slated to spend parts of this week schmoozing and meeting with outdoor recreation industry leaders, sportsman group officials and the NRA. He speaks early Tuesday morning at an outdoor industry group event in Washington. Friday afternoon, Zinke and Trump are both scheduled to address a meeting of the NRA's lobbying arm, the Institute for Legislative Action, in Georgia. On his first day in office earlier this year, Zinke revoked an agency rule that had banned lead ammunition and fishing sinkers and directed agency heads to help figure out new opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation on public lands.

OLD KING COAL: The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis released a [research analysis](#) Friday looking at the impacts of 24 coal-fired units at 14 plants retiring in 2017, and 22 more units at 11 plants shuttering in 2018. It looks at how the closures would affect specific mining companies and regions.

HELPING OUT: The American Council for Capital Formation is out with [a report](#) today recommending a number ways to lessen regulatory burdens on small businesses. They include expanding congressional authority to review and potentially repeal regulations; expanding opportunities for small business input in the rulemaking process and boosting staffing levels at OMB and OIRA so they can better evaluate the costs and benefits of rules before they're finalized.

PIPELINES, NEEDED: Failing to construct additional pipeline infrastructure in the Northeast could cost 78,000 jobs and \$7.6 billion in GDP by 2020, a [new report](#) out today by the U.S. Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy concludes. It looks at the impacts of pipelines on electricity prices in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

QUIST RELEASES PUBLIC LANDS AD: Democrat congressional candidate Rob Quist released [another ad](#) Friday vowing to "defend our right to hunt on public lands and protect our public lands from private developers" as the race to fill the seat held by Zinke heats up. That comes as the NRCC [pours an additional \\$1.2 million](#) in TV ad airtime backing Republican Greg Gianforte in the race.

Speaking of Montana, the president's son, Donald Trump Jr., [tweeted](#) that he was out West for the weekend: "No better way to spend #EarthDay than in the stunning state of Montana!"

Loved getting out with terrific people in one of my favorite states!" Fishing and hunting appeared to be on the agenda.

CH-CH-CHANGES: Senate Finance Chairman [Orrin Hatch](#) told a Utah political gathering over the weekend to expect "[some changes](#)" to the Bears Ears National Monument in the state. He didn't provide further details, but his comments come [days after](#) the veteran senator visited the monument.

TEAMING UP: The Business Council for Sustainable Energy today announces a new partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts' Clean Energy Business Network. "This partnership will give the clean energy industry a stronger, more unified voice in our nation's capital and throughout the country," Lisa Jacobson, the council's president, said in a statement.

MOVER, SHAKER: Claire Douglass is joining the National Audubon Society as director of national campaigns. She was previously the campaign director for climate and energy at Oceana (h/t POLITICO Influence).

Dennis McGinn has joined the board of directors of CustomerFirst Renewables; he was previously assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations and environment.

QUICK HITS

- Chicago EPA Workers Prepare For Budget Battle With Storytelling Class. [WBEZ](#).
- New SUNY chancellor is ex-Obama energy official, sources say. [Times Union](#).
- Protesters demand Frelinghuysen support EPA on Earth Day. [Daily Record](#).
- Embattled EPA pitches 40 "quick fixes" to slow poisoning of water at inactive Colorado mines. [Denver Post](#).
- Michael Bloomberg to world leaders: ignore Trump on climate change. [The Guardian](#).
- Authorities Drop 33 Cases Against Dakota Access Protesters. [The Associated Press](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

1:00 p.m. — Arctic 21 [briefing](#) on climate change, Hyatt Regency Reston, 1800 Presidents St., Reston, Va.

TUESDAY

8:00 a.m. — Outdoor Industry Association releases its "2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy Report," National Press Club, Holeman Lounge, 529 14th St. NW, 13th floor

WEDNESDAY

7:30 a.m. — BakerHostetler's 28th Annual Legislative [Seminar](#), Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Ave. NW

10:00 a.m. — "[A Review of the Technical, Scientific, and Legal Basis of the WOTUS \(Waters of the United States\) Rule](#)," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "[H.R. 1, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2017](#)," House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee, 2123 Rayburn

THURSDAY

9:00 a.m. — Our Children's Trust and Earth Guardians host a "[Youth Climate Lawsuit Speak-Out](#)" on the steps of the Supreme Court, U.S. Supreme Court

10:00 a.m. — "[Outdoor Recreation: Vast Impact of the Great Outdoors](#)," House Energy and Commerce Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection, 2123 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — [Hearing](#) to receive testimony on H.R. 339, the Northern Mariana Islands Economic Expansion Act, Senate Energy and Natural Resources, 366 Dirksen

1:30 p.m. — "Cracking a Frozen Debate: Where's the Political Consensus on Clean Energy Policy?" Information Technology & Innovation Foundation, G-11 Dirksen

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. — BOEM offshore wind listening session, The Westin Annapolis Hotel, 100 Westgate Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401

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<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/04/energy-rare-bright-spot-for-trump-as-100-days-near-022487>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Trump to sign executive orders on drilling, cybersecurity and a rural America task force
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By Andrew Restuccia | 04/23/2017 08:42 PM EDT

President Donald Trump will sign a series of executive orders this week on offshore drilling, cybersecurity, veterans affairs and agriculture, according to sources familiar with the administration's plans.

The orders come in the run-up to the president's 100th day in office. By Friday, Trump will have signed 32 executive orders, the most signed by a president in the first 100 days since World War II, according to the White House.

One order will mark the administration's first steps this week toward expanding oil and gas drilling in waters off the U.S. coast.

The order will call for a "review of the locations available for offshore oil and gas exploration and of certain regulations governing offshore oil and gas exploration," the White House said.

Former President Barack Obama put large portions of the Chukchi Sea in the Arctic and dozens of underwater canyons off the East Coast permanently off limits for drilling during his final weeks in office. His administration had previously shelved plans that would have opened up other parts of East Coast and Arctic waters to oil exploration in the coming years.

Some advocates for offshore drilling have also called for opening up the Pacific Coast for new drilling for the first time in decades, and lifting the prohibition on exploration in the eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico, a move that's long been opposed by politicians from both parties in Florida.

Trump will also sign an executive order calling on the Interior Department to review previous monument designations under the Antiquities Act. Republicans have criticized Obama for designating more than two dozen national monuments during his time in office. Once an area becomes a national monument, it is largely off limits to drilling, fishing and mining.

A third executive order will establish a Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection in the Department of Veterans Affairs. The office will help the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to discipline or terminate VA managers or employees who fail to carry out their duties in helping our veterans."

A fourth order will set up an interagency task force to "examine the concerns of rural America and suggest legislative and regulatory changes to address them."

Axios [first reported](#) details of the executive orders.

Trump is also expected to sign his long-awaited executive order on cybersecurity later this week, but with a major portion removed, according to multiple people familiar with the White House's plans.

The directive, which could come on Friday, will kick off reviews of each federal agency's digital defenses and direct agency heads to adopt specific cyber standards.

But the presidential fiat — which has undergone numerous revisions since an early version leaked in January — will no longer contain a section on modernizing federal IT systems, according to these sources.

Instead, White House senior adviser Jared Kushner will oversee the development of a separate executive order focusing on a federal IT overhaul, said a former official with insight into the administration's strategy.

Cory Bennett and Eric Geller contributed to this report.

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Mulvaney downplays chances of government shutdown [Back](#)

By Patrick Temple-West | 04/23/2017 09:42 AM EDT

The White House is continuing to negotiate with congressional Democrats over funding for the government, and a shutdown after Friday is not likely, President Donald Trump's budget director said Sunday.

Speaking on "Fox News Sunday," Mick Mulvaney, the Office of Management and Budget director, downplayed concerns that Trump might demand funding for the proposed border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Asked whether Trump will sign a government funding bill that does not include funding for border security, Mulvaney said: "We don't know yet. We are asking for our priorities and, importantly, we are offering to give Democrats some of their priorities as well."

He scolded Democrats for obstructionism by saying that in 2006, Democratic Sens. Barack Obama and Chuck Schumer (now the Senate minority leader) voted for border security funding.

"We're trying to get a border wall to protect millions of low-income Americans," Mulvaney said, but added: "We'll negotiate with the Democrats. The negotiations are not finished yet. We think we have given them a reasonable set of choices that they want in exchange for what we want."

"I don't think anybody foresees or expects or wants a shutdown at the end of next week," he said.

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Democrats push government toward shutdown [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett, Seung Min Kim and Ben Weyl | 12/08/2016 06:41 PM EDT

Democrats are pushing the government to the brink of a shutdown, with coal country Senate Democrats leading a strategy to oppose a GOP spending bill if their demands aren't met for a longer extension of expiring health care benefits for coal miners.

Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Sherrod Brown of , who are both up for reelection in 2018 from states won by Donald Trump, are leading the charge to get a better deal from Republican leaders. And their push helped hardened resistance to the GOP throughout the rest of the 46-member Democratic caucus as the day went on. But Republicans say they will not renegotiate a four-month extension of coal miner health benefits and that Democrats have lost all leverage after the House passed the spending bill, 326-96, and then promptly left town.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) set in motion votes to pass the bill, leaving Democrats only procedural tactics to delay the measure through Friday's funding deadline — which would put Senate Democrats in line to be blamed for a potential government shutdown. Flanked by coal miners during a bitingly cold outdoor news conference on Thursday evening, Manchin insisted this is "not a shutdown issue" and maintained he has a "strong commitment" from his Democratic colleagues to stand firm and demand a yearlong health care extension.

"I just want to say to everybody here, we are going to win this fight. I can't predict the exact

path, but we are going to win this fight because we're right," said Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, the ascending Democratic leader. "We want to get these beautiful people their due, and we won't stop 'til we do."

Schumer and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), met privately with Manchin and Democratic Sens. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Mark Warner of Virginia to hash out the matter on Thursday afternoon. This followed an hours-long Democratic caucus meeting that ginned up the party in opposition to the government funding measure — which did not include a yearlong insurance extension for miners — and a water infrastructure bill that excluded "Buy America" provisions.

"A few months extension is not sufficient," Warner said after meeting with party leaders. He chuckled when asked whether he was comfortable with a shutdown. "The solution is pretty easy. It is for our Republican friends to get this fixed."

But after all those meetings, Democrats have not come up with a viable plan to achieve their goals or rule out a government shutdown. Their hope is that they can persuade the House to unanimously pass a bill with the health care extension in it, a long-shot plan that GOP leaders say is entirely implausible.

"The House can do things when they leave. Three people show up and they do it," Brown said in an interview. "That's a solution."

AshLee Strong, a spokeswoman for House Speaker Paul Ryan, said the time for negotiation is over.

"The House just took its last votes of the year," she said after the spending bill passed the House.

The Senate will hold a rare Friday session to try to work out a last minute deal and avert a shutdown.

Republicans said that despite their tactics, Democrats are going to be on the losing end of the fight. With the House slated to leave for the year on Thursday afternoon, it became impossible for the Senate to amend the spending legislation without hauling back House members later. And Senate Republicans said their members are increasingly irked by Brown and Manchin's fight.

"They're not going to get what they want. They ought to actually be grateful for what they got," said Sen. John Cornyn, the No. 2 Senate Republican. Manchin "can make life more difficult for everybody else and kill a lot of good legislation. It's not going to advance his issue."

"If Republicans want to shut it down, they will," shot back Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.). "We are all committed. We want to find health care for miners and widows for a year."

Republican aides argued that it was only through McConnell's advocacy for miners that the four-month health care extension is even in the bill. One senior Republican source said that the opportunity for negotiating further is "history" now that the House is gone.

On the line is health care coverage for more than 8,000 West Virginia miners and for thousands more in other Appalachian states. A Democratic aide said that even with the four-

month extension miners will get cancellation notices in January.

So Democrats said it wasn't enough and that the GOP was turning its back on the working class voters who just elected Donald Trump. Heitkamp said that Democrats believe "there has been a renewed interest in these types of issues with the election of president-elect Trump."

"They totally gave the back of their hand to miners," Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) told reporters. "Now, who's for the working people? Where is Donald Trump on miners? Crickets."

Heitkamp and McCaskill are also up for reelection in 2018 in states that Trump won resoundingly. Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, another state Trump won, has joined Manchin and Brown in objecting to routine procedural requests. On Wednesday evening, Brown objected to a resolution observing the Pearl Harbor anniversary.

Under Senate procedure, Manchin and Brown could hold up the spending bill until Sunday, though a blockade of that length would take efforts from more Democratic senators than just those two. The government shuts down at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday without congressional action. Cornyn said that Senate won't leave until it wraps up its work, which may mean weekend work and a Monday session.

Manchin's West Virginia colleague, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, also said she will oppose the spending legislation. But the funding bill is likely to pass when it gets a vote, Republicans said.

"They don't have the votes," said Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.). "It's just a question of how much they want to drag it out. Right now, sounds like a lot."

Manchin is scheduled to go to Trump Tower on Friday morning, just hours before the Friday shutdown deadline, and according to news reports, he might be interviewing for a job in the Trump administration.

The moderate Democrat said he would "absolutely" cancel the meeting if the senatorial dispute continued.

"I'm supposed to go in the morning, so we'll see," Manchin said. "I'm sure people would understand [if I canceled]. I've got to be here and voting."

House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers assured reporters a government shutdown would not happen. Asked whether his committee would have to draft a three-day stopgap bill in case the Senate doesn't clear the continuing resolution by Friday night, he said. "That call will come from leadership. We'll be ready if that happens." Asked if he would be getting on a plane after the House's final votes this afternoon, he said, "No I'm not."

Further scrambling the situation, Democrats are trying to amend water infrastructure legislation passed by the House to include permanent "Buy America" language. The fights are becoming intertwined because the spending bill and water bill are the last two major pieces of legislation in Congress this year.

"We'll see how this unfolds. We haven't made a final decision" on whether to block those bills, said Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

The legislation, which would maintain current funding and policy for the government through

April 28, must be passed by midnight Friday. Lawmakers are eager to get home and the bill, which House Republicans unveiled Tuesday night, is largely free of controversy. And as the last train leaving the station for the 114th Congress, the so-called continuing resolution is serving as a prime vehicle for other sought-after measures designed to appeal to members on both sides of the aisle.

Elana Schor and Kaitlyn Burton contributed to this report.

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NRCC ups Montana ad spending to \$1.2 million [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider | 04/21/2017 01:13 PM EDT

The NRCC is upping its TV ad reservations in Montana to \$1.2 million before the May 25 special House election there, a NRCC aide confirmed, expanding its spending in the race between Republican Greg Gianforte and Democrat Rob Quist.

The NRCC has already invested \$148,000 in the Montana special election. So far, [the NRCC's ads](#) have labeled Quist a liberal on health care, taxes and guns and linked him to House Minority Leader [Nancy Pelosi](#).

Congressional Leadership Fund has also expanded its ad buy in the district and [released a new TV ad Friday](#). The increased Republican spending comes as Quist's fundraising has accelerated. On Thursday, his campaign [announced](#) passing \$2 million raised, including \$700,000 in the previous nine days.

The NRCC ads will air on Great Falls and Missoula broadcast stations, but will expand to statewide.

Quist and Gianforte, who lost a run for governor in 2016, are running to replace Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in the state's at-large House district.

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